

Sid & Nancy

Review by Susanne Cleis

Sid & Nancy is a film by Alex Cox, whose first film, Repo Man, is a cult classic.

In spite of its horrendous theme—punk lovers wasting away in a mutually destructive relationship—*Sid & Nancy* is a beautiful movie.

Emotionally raw to the point of becoming at times disorientingly surreal, the film is a superb piece of craftsmanship, with excellent cinematography and sound track. I'm glad that movies don't smell, I can tell you. It would have been much too realistic. As it was, the graphic violence and debauchery were painful to watch, even while the film itself remained compelling and provocative, a visual banquet of punk culture.

Sid & Nancy is the story of the love affair between Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols and an American groupie, Nancy Spungen. The Sex Pistols made a name for themselves in the late '70s punk scene as a radical band of bad boys who practiced outrage as part of their image. They were being marketed by their manager, Malcolm McLaren, in the same way he marketed the art fashions that he sold in his King's Row boutique.

Having grown up in London's East End slums, the boys were used to living disorganized, unruly lives. Johnny Rotten got named for

the condition of his teeth, and Sid Vicious (born John Ritchie) was named after his homicidal hamster. As a band, they had a couple of hit records in England before they got banned from the air by the BBC.

During their American tour, the band literally imploded, their violence—allowed free reign—having finally caused the total disintegration of any comradeship there might have been between its members.

The movie opens with Sid practically catatonic after the police show up at the Chelsea Hotel to haul away Nancy's body. From there it gets intense. Flash back to London, where Sid meets Nancy.

Her greatest ambition is to be the world's most famous groupie. She's brassy, foul-mouthed, and addicted to heroin. Chloe Webb does a splendid job of embodying Nancy's limited wit and outrageous spunk. An actress who'd let herself look like that on-screen has to have brass balls. She gets really gross.

Gary Oldham as Sid is skinny, wild, crazy, and scary. It's hard to imagine, if you're (apparently) as conservative as I am, what it must be like to live inside that kid, with the kind of persona in which one must always be thinking up the next outrage, the more disgusting behavior, the most foul of obscen-



Sid Vicious, his girlfriend Nancy and the punk rock group The Sex Pistols are portrayed in the current film at the Bijou.

ties. You become your own hard act to follow.

Their courtship is a blood ritual against a brick wall.

Sid is a rock zombie. Johnny Rotten lives up to his name.

When they eat, they let food fall out of their mouths, throw leavings and trash anywhere. I couldn't help wondering who cleaned up after those kids, if anyone did, ever, or if they lived in their garbage.

A lot of the incidents in the film were very funny. Like where Nancy dresses in Sid's mother's clothes

and, seeing herself in a store window, rips them off in the middle of the street, screaming "Aaaaaahhhhh, I look like Stevie Nicks!"

Sid and Nancy are two kids who never get to grow up. Their dependency on heroin prevents them from achieving any kind of maturation of thought or action. It becomes, in the end, a substitute for sex, and obliterates all feeling.

Making the film was obviously grueling work for the actors and crew. Surely they were grueling lives for Sid and Nancy.

now showing

Angel Heart: A private eye's search for a missing singer leads to strange encounters in Louisiana and New York. Mickey Rourke and Robert DeNiro star in this 1950-ish drama. Cinema World (342-6536).

Black Widow: A woman feigns friendship with a suspected husband-killer in an effort to learn the truth. Stars Debra Winger and Theresa Russell (*Insignificance*). Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Crocodile Dundee: A celebrated Aussie adventurer, naive to city ways, is still spending time in the Big Apple. Oakway (342-5351).

Hoosiers: A "washed up" basketball coach tries for a comeback as head of a small high school team. Stars Gene Hackman and Barbara Hershey. Cinema World (342-6536).

Hunk: An unsatisfied human makes a devilish deal in return for a groovy body. West 11th (342-4142).

Lethal Weapon: Too tough L.A. cops crack down on an international drug ring. Stars hunk Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. McDonald (344-4343).

Mannequin: Can a handsome young actor find true romance with a department store dummy? Andrew McCarthy finds out. West 11th (342-4142).

Miss Mary: A strict English governess takes a position with a privileged Argentine family, ultimately to find an emotional conflict. Stars Julie Christie. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Nightmare on Elm St. 3—Dream Warriors: Third in the series! Scaremonger Freddie appears through a new array of special effects. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Outrageous Fortune: A pair of women search for their two-timing lover, who has mysteriously disappeared. Bette Midler and Shelley Long star in this cross-country comedy. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Peggy Sue Got Married: A woman awakens in her past, and has a chance to alter her future life. Stars Kathleen Turner (*Jewel of the Nile*). Directed by Francis Coppola (*The Cotton Club*). Fine Arts (747-2201).

Platoon: A day-by-day G.I. perspective of the Vietnam war. Directed by Oliver Stone (*Salvador*), who received a Purple Heart in 1967. National (344-3431).

Radio Days: This remembrance of scenes past reveals the effect of early radio shows upon a child's unglamorous family. Directed and narrated by an off-camera Woody Allen. Cinema World (342-6536).

A Room with a View: A young Englishwoman, during her proper Victorian finishing, has to choose between her dignified fiancé and an unorthodox artist. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Sid & Nancy: The improbable, doomed, love story between ex-Sex Pistol Sid Vicious and groupie/junkie Nancy Spungen. Directed by Alex Cox (*Repo Man*). Bijou (686-2458).

Some Kind of Wonderful: A young man with an eye toward the local queen teen is blind to closer affections. Written by John Hughes. Stars Eric Stoltz (*Mask*) and Lea Thompson (*Back to the Future*). Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Stand By Me: A reminiscence of boyhood adventure and friendship as four youths search for a missing corpse. (Shot in Brownsville, OR.) Late show at the Bijou (686-2458).

Star Trek IV: More adventure for Kirk and crew. This episode brings them back to our present to help us do what we alone cannot—survive! West 11th (342-4142).

Tin Men: Comedy. The lives of aluminum siding salesmen, with a side of revenge becoming romance. Stars Danny DeVito, Richard Dreyfuss, and Barbara Hershey. Cinema World (342-6536).

Witchboard: Some kind of horror, which opens this week at Springfield Quad (726-9073).

—Michael Sussmoon

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